

# President's Report 2004

## Presented at the AGM of the Royal Zoological Society of NSW on 23 October 2004

This year has been a productive one for the RZS, with a considerable amount of energy devoted to publishing and marketing our products.

A year ago we held a one day forum on the "Threatened Species Legislation – is it just an Act?" and during the year the papers from that forum have been submitted, reviewed and are currently being printed as we speak. These proceedings are timely given that changes to this legislation are imminent as is the way that the legislation will be implemented. So this publication is extremely timely.

Another outstanding achievement of the Society is the publication of "Conservation of Australia's Forest Fauna", the second edition - but this really is a completely new book, over twice the size with every chapter completely rewritten - an amazing task and Dan Lunney as the editor, as well as being a contributor, has done an enormous amount of work in organizing this publication and liaising with over 125 authors. Basically Dan did all the job of organizing reviewers, editing and preparing the manuscripts to go the typesetters - saving an enormous amount of \$\$ for the Society. Thank you Dan, we should also acknowledge the grant in aid of \$10,000- for this publication - and it was Dan who wrote this grant from Environment Trusts of NSW.

However, the task of publishing our papers is only part of the story - we then need to distribute these to our members but also to make the scientific community out there aware of these important publications and sell them, and Tania Rose from the University of NSW has been playing a pivotal role in selling our publications and as shown in the accounts. We have been very successful in selling books this year and hopefully this will continue— and certainly we do need to sell the Forest Fauna book- so please everybody tell your friends about it and encourage them to buy this at its bargain price of \$75.

Apart from these two publications, an edition of Australian Zoologist is about to go to the printers as we speak (and I would like to record my thanks to the editors and the editorial committee), and members will be receiving all three shortly and hopefully, everybody here has taken their forest fauna book and any for their colleagues –in order to save on the postage.

This year we were able to award 9 Ethel Mary Reid Awards to PhD students from a wide range of Universities and covering an amazing diversity of topics. These grants are extremely important for these studies, as documented by last year's winner's reports, which found these funds to be useful in increasingly tight funding situations. I would like to thank the sub committee for undertaking the task of selecting the students from a large number of applicants - the committee consisted of Will Meikle, Brad Law, Peggy Eby and myself.

The Whitley awards, which were presented at the Australian Museum in September covered a wide range of books, cd's and dvd's covering a wide range of topics, and including the award of 3 Whitley medals and 10 other awards (for details, see our website). Noel Tait organized the evening, and I am extremely grateful for this and I would like to extend my thanks to the sub committee—Shelley Burgin, Ron Strahan, Dieter Hochuli and Frank Lemckert.

Dieter Hochuli and Peter Banks organized the student day which was held on the 9<sup>th</sup> October, the date having been chosen way before it was known that it was election day. However, this did not deter undergrads and post grads from coming to a day at the Zoo to learn about future job and research activities. This is an important role the Society can play in training future scientists and members of RZS.

The Society has been continuing to join the 21<sup>st</sup> century with members being encouraged to receive their newsletters electronically, increasing the coverage of our website and computerizing our membership database, which will greatly facilitate tracking members and renewals, etc, and giving us a better profile as to who our members are- as we continually must be aware of the competition for members with other scientific societies. So, thank you Peter Banks for being so helpful in developing these access databases and resolving teething problems.

Finally, I should like to thank the members of my Council for their help during the year- and while I have enjoyed very much being President for the past 3 years, it is time for me to stand down, although I will be staying on Council and to hand over to our President elect Shelley Burgin- it has been a pleasure to work with my council and I wish the incoming Council all these best for next year.

However, before I stand down I would like to convey on behalf of the Society and the Council a thanks to Dan Lunney for all his work during the past year - and previous years, but especially this year which has been culminated with the Forest Fauna book and we would like to present you, Dan, with a life membership of the Society and a small present as a token for your outstanding contribution to the Society, and even more importantly to zoological conservation of endangered communities in Australia.

**Pat Hutchings**  
President

(PS. At the 2003 AGM, two fellows were elected, as stated in last year's president's report. What follows is their citations, as indicated at the end of my previous president's report.)

## Martin Denny FRZS

The citation of the award on becoming a Fellow of the Royal Zoological Society of NSW. Presented at the AGM of the RZS on 25 October 2003.

In an email to Martin Denny from me, on behalf of the council of the Royal Zoological Society of NSW, opened as follows: the council of the RZS has voted to offer you an FRZS, i.e. to become a fellow of the society, on the basis of your sustained contribution to zoology, to the society and your willingness to be original in your application of your zoology conserving fauna. If you accept, then you will be awarded the fellowship at the 2003 AGM this year. Congratulations.

Martin replied in his usual low-key way, saying: "I am very pleased to accept the offer of a FRZS."

Martin attached his long cv, and even offered to provide a short version. I enjoyed the long version so much that I did not seek the short version. What follow are just a few points that struck me as highlights. It also helped fill in lots of parts that I only half knew over the last 27 years that we have been interacting. The period of greatest overlap was during his period on the council of the RZS 1981-85. What is so startling about Martin Denny is his ability to be original. He is also a fine zoologist, and when that is combined with originality, we have a great mix. In his section on contract work, Martin lists 367 contracts since 1971. That is a staggering number, but what is most important is the fact that a skilled zoologist chose to enter this new field. To my mind, this suddenly raised the standard and the beneficial results have been felt everywhere. Three recent contracts reveal his unusual mind.

151. Hastings Municipal Council - Plan of management for koalas in Hastings Municipality.

248. Maclean Shire Council - Fauna and flora study of Maclean Shire.

309. RSPCA Australia/Environment Australia Survey of compliance with the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos.

The reason for selecting these contracts is because for the first two, Martin had kindly lent them to me to read because they were relevant to my work, and for the third I heard his stunning talk on the matter, but the report at that point was embargoed.

Today, we again saw Martin in action both as a representative of a contractors' group, indeed as President of the Ecological Consultants Association of NSW Inc, and once again helping the RZS run this forum on *Threatened Species Legislation: is it just an Act?* Regular readers of RZS forums are now familiar with the name Martin Denny. He is not shy, he participates in the debates as the record of the debates and plenary sessions testify, and he shares his skills willingly.

There will be a report on the reason for selection published in the next edition of the *Australian Zoologist*, but for now, just a handshake. Martin, again, congratulations on the award of an FRZS.

### Dan Lunney

On behalf of the council of the Royal Zoological Society of NSW.

## Paul Adam FRZS

The citation of the award on becoming a Fellow of the Royal Zoological Society of NSW. Presented at the AGM of the RZS on 25 October 2003.

Consider the following zany email exchange.

*Lunney to Adam:* the council of the RZS is offering you an award of an FRZS (Fellow of the Royal Zoological Society of NSW) to you because of your outstanding contribution as a scientist to the conservation of Australian plants, animals and habitats.

*Adam to Lunney:* I would be honoured. I attach a cv. I would add one extra - which in the circumstances is highly relevant - pre University my school was Lancaster Royal Grammar School (I know you like these trivial pursuit obscure connections -- I will let you mull it over prior to enlightening you.)

*Lunney to Adam:* Header: Sir Richard Owen. Message: How did I go in mulling it over?

*Adam to Lunney:* Jackpot - not only was Owen a distinguished old Lancastrian, he also gave his name to Owen House to which I was (purely at random) assigned.

Like Richard Owen, Paul Adam has made a great contribution internationally to biology and to Australia in particular. Paul has been a great contributor to the RZS. Forum after forum contains a learned contribution from him, and each is charged with a profound concern for conserving biodiversity.

The award to Paul Adam of an FRZS is an historic first. Paul is a botanist; this award has only ever gone to dyed-in-the-wool zoologists. What Paul has done has breached that false divide. He has contributed his immense skills as a biologist, writer and contributor away from the glare, such as refereeing, to conserving Australia. NSW in particular has retained more of its biodiversity than it would have if Paul had stayed in Cambridge.

Paul Adam also has a keen sense of words, wit and history. The very title of his talk in today's forum on Threatened Species Legislation was: "Opening a can of words". It is this breadth of intellectual interests that keep all of us on our toes. I have only ever surprised Paul once. He was curious as to how I twigged to Richard Owen so fast, given his apparently oblique clue. The simple answer is that I looked up the school on the web and started reading. Snap, the connection leapt from the page. This interest in history also reflects Paul's enthusiasm for ecological history, which is a discipline that is only in its relative infancy, and characteristically, an untried path has never stalled Paul's enquiring mind.

This account also contains a glimpse of Paul Adam's contribution not read out at the presentation of the award (see below), including examples from his long list of publications, his committee work, his contribution to university life, to NGOs and the NSW government. This is a selfless, lifelong contribution. It is an invaluable flair that he has added to conserving our biodiversity. It has been done with grace, wit and a critical eye that is so essential to seeing what is important to our common heritage rather than how it might just benefit one individual set of interests. For now, it's a handshake and congratulations from the RZS of NSW.

### Dan Lunney

On behalf of the council of the Royal Zoological Society of NSW

Some details of a luminescent career: 64 refereed papers and book chapters showing a sustained contribution over the last 20 years. Early in his long list of publications is a subject that shows a British heritage and has remained a lifelong passion:

**Adam, P. (1976).** The occurrence of bryophytes on British saltmarshes. *Journal of Bryology*, **9**:265-274.

**Adam, P. (1977).** The ecological significance of 'halophytes' in the Devonian flora. *New Phytologist*, **78**: 237-244.

**Adam, P. (1977).** On the phytosociological status of *Juncus maritimus* on British saltmarshes. *Vegetatio*, **34**: 81-94.

The list provided finished with:

**Williams, G. and Adam, P. (1999).** Pollen sculpture in subtropical rain forest plants: is wind pollination more common than previously suspected? *Biotropica*, **31**:520-524.

**Mokany, K. and Adam, P. (2000).** The biogeographical attributes of the threatened flora of New South Wales. *Cunninghamia*, **6**: 873-892.

**Williams, G.A., Adam, P. and Mound, L.A. (2001).** Thrips (Thysanoptera) pollination in Australian subtropical rainforests, with particular reference to pollination of *Wilkiea huegeliana* (Monimiaceae). *Journal of Natural History*, **35**:1-21.

**Adam, P. and Williams, G. (2001).** Dioecy, self-incompatibility and vegetative reproduction in Australian subtropical rainforest trees and shrubs. *Cunninghamia*, **7**: 89-100.

**Adam, P. (2001).** A role for restoration ecologists in endangered community conservation? *Ecological Management & Restoration*, **2**:165-166.

**Williams, G. and Adam, P. (2001).** The insect assemblage visiting the flowers of the subtropical rainforest pioneer tree *Alphitonia excelsa* (Fenzl) Reiss ex Benth. (Rhamnaceae). *Proceedings of the Linnean Society of New South Wales*, **123**:235-259.

These publications are Australian, include a conservation bent and show a link to other ways of seeing the world. The two books for which he is justly famous are:

**Adam, P. (1990).** *Saltmarsh Ecology*. Cambridge University Press - revised paperback edition 1993.

**Adam, P. (1992).** *Australian Rainforests*. Oxford University Press - revised paperback editions 1994, 1997.

Paul Adam's continual link to policy, public debate and biology also emerges in his book chapters, such as:

**Adam, P. (1998).** Biodiversity – the biggest of big pictures. In Lunney, D., Dawson, T. and Dickman, C. (eds.) *Is the biodiversity tail wagging the zoological dog*. Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales, Mosman, pp.6-14.

**Adam, P. (1998).** Mangroves and saltmarsh communities. In Atwell, B.J., Kriedemann, P.E. and Turnbull, C.G.N. (eds.) *Plants in Action. Adaptation in nature, performance in cultivation*. Macmillan, Melbourne, pp.563-564.

**Williams, G. and Adam, P. (1999).** Pollination ecology of Australian subtropical rainforests – implications for the conservation of remnant lowland communities. In Horton, S. and Hunter, R.J. (eds.) *Rainforest remnants – a decade of growth*. NPWS, Lismore, pp.122-137.

**Adam, P. (2000).** Morecambe Bay saltmarshes: 25 years of change. In Sherwood, B.R., Gardiner, B.G. and Harris, T. (ed.) *British saltmarshes*. Linnean Society of London, pp.81-107.

**Adam, P. (2001).** Wetlands: policy ahead of knowledge? In Handmer, J.W., Norton, T.W. and Dovers, S.R. (eds.) *Ecology, uncertainty and policy. Managing ecosystems for sustainability*. Prentice Hall, Harlow. pp.209-235.

In addition to this list of refereed publications is an equally long list of non-refereed publications. Rather than call them unrefereed, it is more accurate to call them extension papers because they show a determination to communicate to wide audience. His cv includes the full suite of duties that one would expect from an associate professor (at the University of NSW), but the surprise comes with the massive list of contributions to other organizations, such as:

*Professional Societies:* Ecological Society of Australia, Coast and Wetlands Society, ANZAAS, British Ecological Society, International Union for the Conservation of Nature, Member, Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas. *NSW Government Agencies:* Scientific Committee established by the Threatened Species Conservation Act, National Parks and Wildlife Service Wollemi National Park Advisory Committee, Member, National Parks and Wildlife Service Advisory Council, Member, Scientific Review, North East Forests, Member, Towra Point Steering Committee, Member, Plant Specialist Working Group Member, Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub. *Local Government:* Randwick City Council, City Wide Strategic Plan Reference Group. *Commonwealth:* Ocean Rescue 2000, Member, State of the Marine Environment Review, Australian Nature Conservation Agency, Member, National Wetlands Advisory Committee, Australian Heritage Committee, Member, NSW Natural Environment Panel. *Conservation Groups:* The National Trust of Australia (NSW), (Awarded Voluntary Service Medallion 1999), Nature Conservation Council of NSW, Greening Australia (NSW).